

Kathryn Clarenbach

Kathryn Clarenbach was born in Sparta, Wisconsin. The only girl among three brothers, Kathryn was encouraged by her parents to pursue an education. She graduated from The University of Wisconsin - Madison with a MA in political science. From 1942 to 1944, during WWII, she worked as an administrative analyst in Washington, D.C. for the War Production Board.

At the close of the war, Clarenbach returned to Madison to pursue her Ph.D. After earning her Ph.D., she initiated a continuing education program for women at the UW.

In 1964, Wisconsin Governor John Reynolds created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women and appointed Clarenbach as its chair. With the exception of one term, she chaired the Commission throughout its 15 year existence.

Clarenbach's efforts influenced events beyond the state of Wisconsin. She was instrumental in the creation of National Organization of Women (NOW) and the National Women's Political Caucus. She served as the Executive Director of the National Commission for International Women's Year, and was responsible for planning the National Women's Conference of 1977.

Clarenbach retired from the University of Wisconsin-Extension in 1988. She passed away in 1994.

(From Wisconsin Women: A Gifted Heritage; AAUW, 1982)